

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE FIGHT FOR SARI LAIR

(Sketches 16, 17, 18, 19, 20)

#### JOHNSTON'S BRIGADE ON THE 7TH AUGUST

ALL was quiet on Rhododendron Spur at dawn on the 7th August. Away to the right at Anzac there were sounds of heavy firing. But the rattle of machine guns had never ceased since the launch of the Lone Pine attack, and General Johnston, at the western end of the spur, did not yet know whether the assault on the Nek, with which some of his troops had been meant to co-operate, had been allowed to start without him.

Like the 4th Australian Brigade, the New Zealand Brigade had been weakened physically by its three long months in the Anzac trenches. Most of the men were debilitated by the prevailing sickness; and though they had not as yet been put to much exertion in the present operation, it had been a steep climb to Rhododendron Spur, and all ranks were undoubtedly feeling the strain.

About 6.30 A.M. Johnston decided to wait no longer for his missing Canterbury Battalion, and the advance on Chunuk Bair was again resumed. The Otago Battalion was left behind as a reserve at the small trenches on the western shoulder of the spur, which had been found untenanted, and, shortly after 7 A.M., brigade headquarters, with the Auckland and Wellington Battalions, pressed forward up the spur.<sup>1</sup>

Sketch  
16.

Five hundred yards from the main ridge the crest of Rhododendron Spur rises to a small rocky hummock, known as the "Apex." It then dips to a narrow saddle about 100 yards long, to rise again to a similar feature known as the "Pinnacle." East of the Pinnacle the crest of the spur, here about 70 yards wide, again dips before mounting in a bare, even slope for 300 yards to the southern shoulder of Chunuk Bair.

<sup>1</sup> The Canterbury Battalion joined Otago very shortly afterwards, and was ordered to remain in reserve with that battalion.

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About 7.30 A.M., on reaching the Apex, the head of the 7 Aug. column was met by shots from the main ridge.<sup>1</sup> The column was halted in a small depression to the west of the Apex. Lieut.-Colonel R. Young, commanding the Auckland Battalion, was ordered to prepare to attack Chunuk Bair, and the men were told to take the opportunity to eat a hasty breakfast.

The situation at this moment has been described by the brigade-major of Johnston's brigade:

The situation as seen from the Apex was intensely interesting and indeed astonishing. Looking down towards Anzac all was quiet. At the Nek and Baby 700 not a shot was being fired. We did not then know of the terrible holocaust of the Australian Light Horse Brigade. Above us we could see the trenches on Chunuk Bair bristling with rifles, and a certain amount of rifle fire was coming from that direction. On Hill Q all was quiet. There was no sign of the Indian Brigade . . . or the 4th Australian Brigade. . . . Away at Suvla the bay was a mass of shipping. . . . Some men could be seen on the beaches walking about freely. . . . Peace seemed to reign everywhere.

On going forward to reconnoitre, Colonel Young came under accurate fire, and reported to the brigadier that without artillery support the attack could not succeed. His men were tired; there was no cover on the line of advance, and the enemy had the range to a yard. He urged that a further advance should be delayed till after dark. The brigade-major supported this view; the brigadier agreed; and soon after 8 A.M., in a message to divisional headquarters, he reported that "in view of his 'complete isolation' he 'deemed it prudent' to remain where he was and await the advance of the troops on his left flank.

This advice is said to have been influenced by the fact that at the first landing in April small bodies of Anzac troops, dashing boldly forward without adequate support, were unable to hold their advanced positions and were driven back with loss. Actually, however, there was no similarity between the two situations. On the 7th August Johnston had four battalions in hand. His objective, 500 yards ahead, was a vitally important key-position, the capture of which would hinder the arrival of Turkish reinforcements and help the advance of the troops on

<sup>1</sup> Kannengiesser ("Gallipoli", p. 206) relates that, having reached the top of the ridge at 7 A.M. with two staff officers, he found it unoccupied. Moving forward to reconnoitre, he came across a Turkish battery with an escort of 20 men and the battery commander asleep. Soon afterwards English troops began to approach, "apparently very tired". Kannengiesser ordered the escort of 20 men to open fire, and the British advance was stopped. The "Turkish battery" was probably the two mountain guns between Chunuk Bair and Battleship Hill (see page 198) and the British troops were almost certainly Johnston's column.

7 Aug. his left flank. The long wait for the Canterbury Battalion had increased the difficulties of the attack, but every hour's delay at the Apex would probably make them greater.

General Johnston's action, moreover, was not in accordance with General Birdwood's orders. Birdwood had written to Godley: "You should impress on the officers entrusted with 'each (assaulting column) that the objective to be reached is to 'be aimed at whatever the progress of columns in other parts'" He had also personally addressed the senior officers of the New Zealand and Australian Division and impressed upon them that each part of the force must push on, whether others were held up or not.

On receiving Johnston's message General Godley insisted that Chunuk Bair must be assaulted at 10.30 A.M., following a fifteen minutes' bombardment by ships and shore artillery.

The brigadier and his staff officer were both convinced that success was out of the question. "So convinced was I", writes the brigade-major, "that I begged the brigadier to disobey the order." But this advice was rejected.

At this moment two companies of the 2/15th Gurkhas, who had lost touch with their own column, arrived on the northern slopes of Rhododendron and offered to co-operate with the New Zealanders in any way required. Thereupon Johnston decided that Colonel Young should advance to the attack along the crest of Rhododendron with his three<sup>1</sup> Auckland companies, the two Gurkha companies co-operating on the left flank.

Thus, more than seven hours after schedule time, the main attack by the Right Assaulting Column, whose total strength now amounted to 4½ battalions, was to be opened with only five companies.

In point of fact it was probably true that by 10.30 A.M. the chance of a daylight attack succeeding had already gone. We now know from Turkish sources that up to 7 A.M. the only Turks in the vicinity were a section of artillery escorted by twenty rifles. Somewhere about 7 A.M., two companies of infantry arrived from Mustafa Kemal's division to piquet the main ridge, and these perhaps were the men who were seen by Johnston's brigade-major from the Apex. But they apparently did not stay there long. Colonel Kannengiesser relates that when he first saw them, soon after British troops began to approach the ridge, they were in full retreat, and that he experienced some difficulty in bringing them back to the crest.<sup>2</sup> Kannengiesser himself was wounded shortly afterwards, but

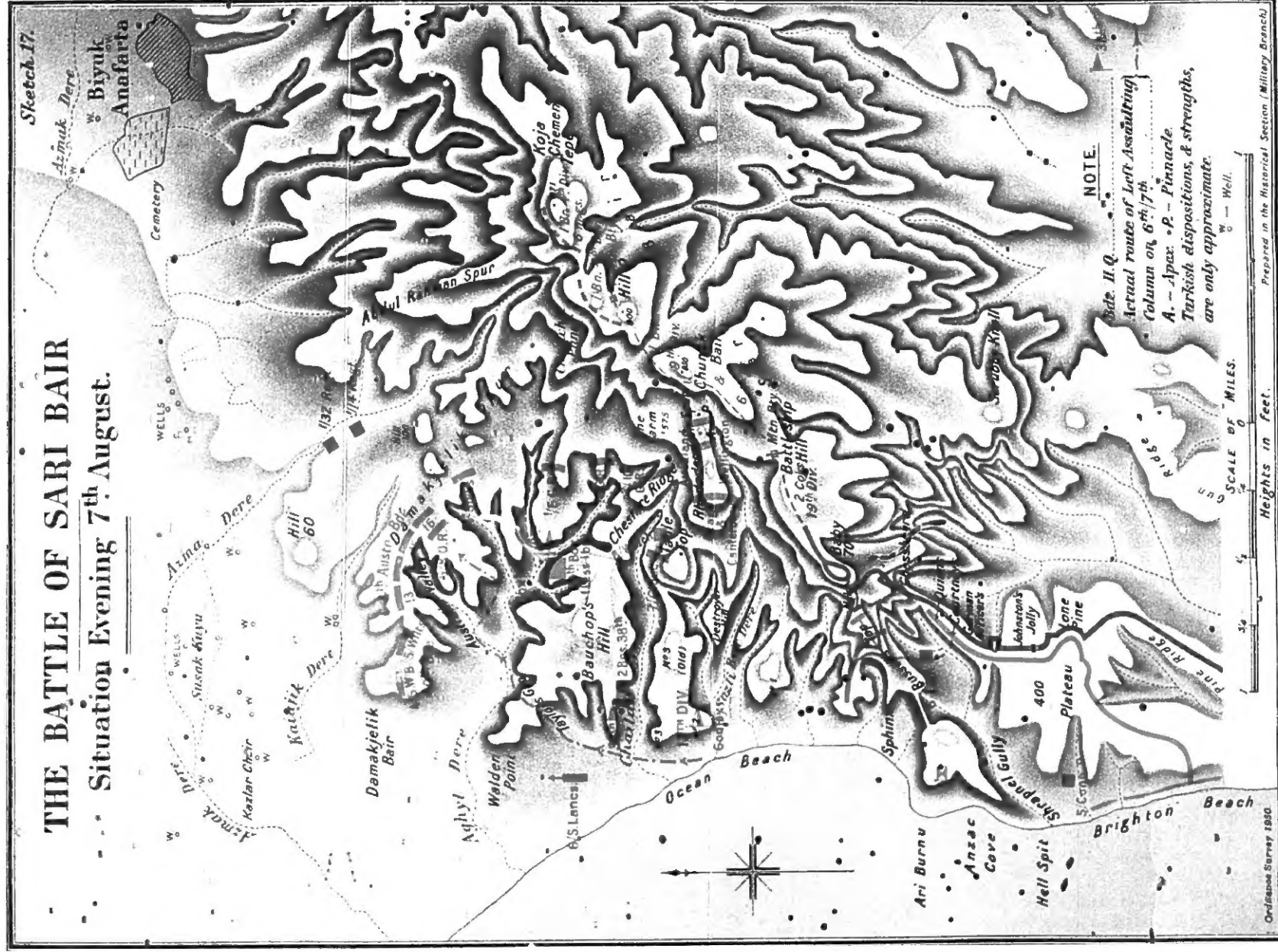
<sup>1</sup> The fourth company was acting as escort to the mountain guns.

<sup>2</sup> "Gallipoli", p. 175.

# THE BATTLE OF SARI BAIR

Situation Evening 7<sup>th</sup> August.

Sketch 17.



NOTE.

Side II Q.  
Actual route of left Assaulting Column on 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>.  
A. - Apex. P. - Pinnacle.  
Turkish dispositions, & strengths, are only approximate.

SCALE OF MILES.

Heights in feet.

Ordnance Survey 1930.

Prepared in the Historical Section (Military Branch).

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the crisis was then over. The leading units of his own two <sup>7 Aug.</sup> regiments arrived a little later, and were in time to oppose the long-delayed attack.

At 10.15 A.M. British field and naval artillery began to shell Chunuk Bair with some degree of accuracy, and a quarter of an hour later the Auckland companies advanced to the attack. They were at once greeted with heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, and the leading platoons were very nearly annihilated. The companies in rear struggled gamely forward; but they, too, suffered heavily, and those who reached the Pinnacle, only 100 yards ahead, were incapable of further effort. In this short advance the three companies lost 250 men.

The Gurkhas also suffered heavy losses as soon as they started to advance; and most of them veered left-handed to the shelter of Aghyl Dere. General Johnston now reported to headquarters that further action was impossible till after night-fall, and General Godley agreed.

## GENERAL COX'S COLUMN ON THE 7TH AUGUST

In the northern half of the battlefield the difficulties of the country, the activity of Turkish snipers, and the utter fatigue of the troops were all playing their part in preventing further progress by the Left Assaulting Column.

Soon after 6.30 A.M. General Cox attached the 14th Sikhs to General Monash's brigade and ordered that officer to resume his advance on Hill 971. But the Australian Battalion commanders had to point out that their men were too exhausted to move again that day, and Cox cancelled his order.

By eight o'clock, therefore, the hope of reaching Hill 971 on the 7th August had disappeared.<sup>1</sup> Not long afterwards General Cox learnt that his Gurkha battalions were so widely separated that there was little chance of their reaching Hill Q, and that Johnston's New Zealanders had failed to occupy Chunuk Bair. Realizing that the whole plan of operations was in danger of failing, he now obtained permission to employ the 39th Brigade (Br.-General W. de S. Cayley)<sup>2</sup> from General Godley's reserve

<sup>1</sup> At 9.37 A.M. Birdwood reported this to G.H.Q., but added that he still hoped to get Hill Q and Chunuk Bair.

<sup>2</sup> General Godley had kept six of his ten New Army battalions in divisional reserve, namely, the 39th Brigade, the 6/S. Lancs. (38th Brigade) and the 2/Welch (pioneer battalion of the 13th Division). The 39th Brigade had been ordered to rendezvous at the entrance to Aghyl Dere at dawn on the 7th, the other two battalions at the entrance to Chailak Dere; and all six were to be used either to confirm a success or to assist in consolidating the main ridge. The 7/N. Staffordshire (39th Brigade) had lost its adjutant

7 Aug. to capture Hill Q and Chunuk Bair before the arrival of Turkish reinforcements.

Cayley received his orders at 11 A.M. As there was no sign of movement towards Chunuk Bair—the Auckland Battalion's advance had not been visible from Aghyl Dere—he was to march on that point first, and then sweep north along the ridge to occupy Hill Q.

Starting off on a personal reconnaissance, Cayley climbed up Cheshire Ridge towards Rhododendron Spur. But finding that the New Zealand Brigade was still on this spur, and that there would not be room for his own brigade as well, he decided to move his own battalions straight up the bed of Aghyl Dere and thence by way of the Farm. On returning to Cox's headquarters, however, he discovered that through some misunderstanding all four of his battalions had started south towards Chailak Dere. Runners were sent to recall them, but the 7th Gloucestershire could not be found, and that unit eventually joined up with the New Zealand Brigade. Of the remainder, only half a battalion found its way back to Aghyl Dere by 4 P.M., and the other two battalions did not get back till dusk. Further effort that day by any of Cox's column was obviously out of the question, and the 7th August ended with nothing done. The 4th Australian Brigade had not moved since dawn, and the Indian brigade, widely scattered, had lost all cohesion. The heat of the day had been tropical; water was very scarce; and the New Army battalions, utterly unaccustomed to hill-climbing, and suffering acutely from thirst, had been tired out to no purpose.

#### GENERAL GODLEY'S PLANS FOR THE 8TH AUGUST

General Godley, realizing from the reports received up to 4 P.M. that nothing more could be done by Cayley's brigade that day, issued orders for all Cox's troops to bivouac where they were, and for the rest of the daylight hours to be spent in reconnaissance. The day had been disappointing. Not only the Anzac plan had miscarried. The situation at Suvla was apparently even worse. The IX Corps was still clustered round the beach near Lala Baba, and there was no sign of an attack on the W Hills, or of any support for Anzac by an advance on Biyuk Anafarta.

Godley calculated, however, that his troops were well situated to renew the attack next morning. With few exceptions

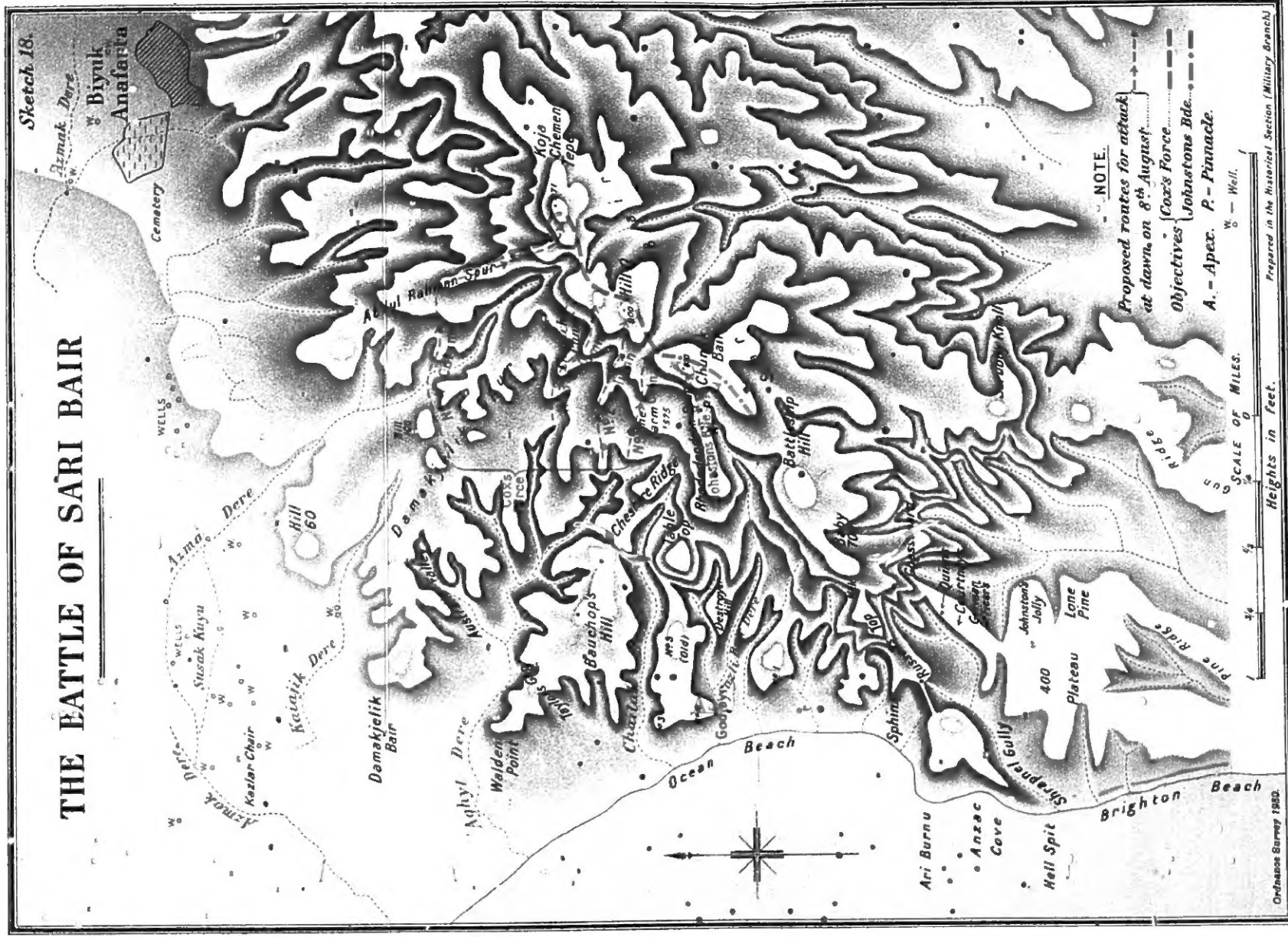
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killed and two company commanders wounded (by shell fire) in the old Anzac position the previous afternoon.



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Sketch 18.



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their losses had only been trifling; a certain amount of water and ammunition had been sent up to the front; and, though the Turks were now fully warned, it was reasonable to hope that they had not yet been able to man the main ridge in any strength. 7 Aug.

At 6 P.M., therefore, he drafted orders<sup>1</sup> for a general assault at dawn on Chunuk Bair, Hill Q and Hill 971. General Johnston, who was to renew the attack on Chunuk Bair, would keep the 7/Gloucestershire and would be reinforced in addition by the 8/Welch (Pioneers), the Maori contingent (two companies) and the Auckland Mounted Rifles. General Cox would again be responsible for the capture of Hill Q and Hill 971 with the 4th Australian Brigade the Indian brigade and the 39th Brigade. The 6/South Lancashire (38th Brigade) would take the place of the 7/Gloucestershire in the 39th Brigade.<sup>2</sup> Sketch 18.

The 7th August was not, however, to close without another misadventure in Johnston's New Zealand Brigade. The Canterbury and Otago Battalions were ordered to move up to the Apex in preparation for the next morning's attack. Otago, trickling forward a few men at a time, arrived without incident. The commander of the Canterbury formed up his battalion in close order on the exposed crest of the spur. It at once suffered heavy casualties from rifle and machine-gun fire from Battleship Hill; the battalion was scattered, and only 37 men reached the Apex that evening.

## GENERAL COX'S FORCE ON THE 8TH AUGUST

The problem which faced General Cox in arranging his attack for the 8th was extraordinarily intricate. Thirteen battalions had been placed under his orders, but, except for the Australian brigade, they were all widely scattered. Cox had very little idea of their exact whereabouts—most of the 39th Brigade were still missing—and his own staff consisted merely of the brigade-major and staff-captain of the Indian brigade. Eventually he divided his force into four columns and allotted to each,

<sup>1</sup> Appendix 8. They were not issued till 8.30 P.M., but a précis of their contents was communicated to brigades between 6 and 7 P.M.

<sup>2</sup> General Birdwood's corps reserve of seven New Army battalions had already dwindled to two (10/Hampshire and 6/R. Irish Rifles of the 29th Brigade). The 38th Brigade (Br.-General A. H. Baldwin), less 6/S. Lancashire, had been moved to No. 3 Post during the afternoon to take the place of the 39th Brigade in Godley's reserve. One battalion of this brigade (6/King's Own) had been sent by Godley to reinforce the 4th Australian Brigade, and only two (6/E. Lancashire and 6/Loyal N. Lancashire) remained with Br.-General Baldwin. Of Br.-General R. J. Cooper's 29th Brigade (10th Division), one battalion (6/Leinster) was supporting the garrison of Quinn's, and another (5/Connaught Rangers) was at Lone Pine.



7 Aug. for the morning's attack; a section of the main ridge. Column commanders were to collect their own troops and get them within assaulting distance of their objectives by 4.15 A.M.

To facilitate the concentration units were allotted to columns according to their relative positions—so far as General Cox knew them—at the time his orders were written. In several cases this necessitated the splitting up of brigades. The actual composition was:

No. 1 Column (Lieut.-Colonel F. G. H. Sutton):

6/S. Lancashire (38th Brigade)  
9/Warwickshire (39th Brigade)  
2/10th Gurkhas (Indian brigade)

Objective—Northern slopes of Chunuk Bair.

No. 2 Column (Lieut.-Colonel T. A. Andrus):

7/N. Staffordshire } 39th Brigade  
9/Worcestershire }  
1/6th Gurkhas (Indian brigade)

Objective—Southern peak of Hill Q.

No. 3 Column (Lieut.-Colonel P. C. Palin):

14th Sikhs } Indian brigade  
1/5th Gurkhas }

Objective—Northern peak of Hill Q.

No. 4 Column (Br.-General J. Monash):

4th Australian Brigade  
6/King's Own (38th Brigade)

Objective—Abdul Rahman Spur and Hill 971.

Br.-General Cayley had no command in the attack, but as soon as the ridge had been captured he was to supervise the consolidation of the position.

On the evening of the 7th Br.-General Monash's brigade was still suffering from its previous night's exertions. Throughout the day the few Turks in the vicinity had shown so little enterprise that parties of Australians on the left flank had strolled a mile to the north to fill their water-bottles at a farm in the Azmak valley. But the majority of the brigade had spent a disturbed day; and on the right—where any attempt to dig attracted a sniper's bullet—had remained on the reverse slope in the shallow rifle-pits dug in the early morning.

Monash decided that the advance should be carried out by the 15th, 14th and 16th Australian Battalions, who were to move forward in that order at 3 A.M. The existing Australian

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line was to be held by the 33th Battalion and the 6/King's 8 Aug. Own. It should be noticed that—even if the brigade had been where its officers supposed it to be, *i.e.* half a mile nearer to its objective than it was in actual fact—the hour of starting was far too late if the crest of Hill 971 was to be reached at a quarter past four. When, therefore, at half past three on the 8th, half an hour after time, the leading Australian troops crossed the valley in front, and began to climb the spur on the other side (which they thought to be Abdul Rahman but which was really the Hill 60 spur), there was already no chance of reaching the crest by dawn, even if the advance should be unopposed.

The advance, however, was not unopposed. Scarcely had the troops reached the Hill 60 spur when daylight paled the sky, and the leading platoons came under very severe fire from four or five machine guns on a hill to their left front. A moment later a Turkish infantry attack developed, and such heavy casualties were inflicted on both the 15th and 14th Battalions that the former was completely broken. The 14th, on the more sheltered side of the spur, retained some cohesion. Thanks to a plucky stand by individual groups of men, and by the 16th Battalion in rear, the enemy's attack was eventually beaten off. But the attempt to advance had failed decisively, and later in the morning all three Australian battalions were back on their old line. The 15th Battalion had lost 400 men and nearly all its officers; the 14th Battalion 8 officers and 250 men.

Of the other columns of General Cox's force, Palin's and Sutton's were so scattered amongst the confusing gullies and spurs that neither of them accomplished anything, and it seems that most of their units never moved at all. Lieut.-Colonel Andrus pushed forward soon after dark with the North Staffordshire and the Worcestershire, and sent a message to the commander of his third battalion—the 1/6th Gurkhas—far out in front, that he would reach him in time to attack Hill Q at 4.15 A.M. But the journey along the upper reaches of Aghyl Dere was so difficult that progress was extremely slow. The New Army battalions were already tired out; companies lost touch with each other; and daylight found the column strung out along the nullah a long way from its rendezvous.

Far out in front, Major C. J. L. Allanson, commanding the 1/6th Gurkhas, waited in vain for any sign of reinforcing troops; and about 8 A.M., realizing that something must be done, he determined to attack Hill Q with his own unit alone. At the beginning of his climb he met with no opposition, and had soon reached a point about 300 feet below the crest of the ridge.

8 Aug. Here, however, the Gurkhas came under a hot fire, and Allanson went back personally in search of reinforcements. In a deep ravine he found some British troops, and with one company of the 7/North Staffordshire and a party of the 6/South Lancashire he now returned to his unit and succeeded in climbing another 100 feet. But the fire in front and flank was so heavy that while daylight lasted nothing more could be done. After dark, however, the Gurkhas and the detachment of South Lancashires pushed upwards to a point about 100 feet below the crest. There they dug in.

In rear nothing was known of Allanson's fine advance, and at 2 P.M., following a conference between Generals Godley and Birdwood, Cox received orders to suspend operations, collect his scattered units, and prepare for a third attempt to gain the main ridge at dawn the following morning.

On this part of the front another precious day had been wasted.

#### THE CAPTURE OF CHUNUK BAIR, 8TH AUGUST

In his orders issued overnight, Br.-General Johnston had arranged to assault the crest of Chunuk Bair with the Wellington Battalion in the centre, the 7/Gloucestershire on the left and the 8/Welch on the right. The Auckland Mounted Rifles and the Maori contingent were to follow in support, and the Otago Battalion was to hold the Apex position. Owing to the narrowness of Rhododendron Spur near the Pinnacle, the advance was to begin in column of platoons, the Wellington Battalion leading, and the rear platoons would extend outwards as the breadth of the spur increased. Zero hour was fixed for half past three.

The enemy showed no activity during the night, and all was quiet when, shortly after 3 A.M., the troops began to form up in rear of the Apex. But here, too, the advance was late in starting, and dawn was just appearing when the leading platoons of the Wellington passed through the Auckland Battalion, still established at the Pinnacle, and headed for the main ridge.

After the previous day's experience it was looked upon as certain that the advance would be very costly, and every moment a storm of fire was expected from the frowning ridge above. But to the general surprise the troops went on unchecked. Not a shot was fired as the dreaded hill was breasted, and the top of the ridge was gained without a blow. The Turkish infantry had gone; and the sole occupants of this key position were a machine-gun crew asleep. Shortly afterwards two companies of the Wellington Battalion (Lieut.-Colonel

W. G. Malone) started to dig in on the crest,<sup>1</sup> with two platoons 8 Aug. pushed out on the forward slope. The remainder of the battalion began a support trench on the reverse slope of the hill.

The men were in high spirits. Away on their right the growing daylight was showing up the paths and tracks in rear of the enemy's lines at Anzac, now at last outflanked. Straight to their front were the shining waters of the Narrows—the goal of the expedition. Victory seemed very near.

But the triumph was short-lived. It was only at Chunuk Bair that the Turkish garrison, influenced by some unexplained panic, had abandoned their new line. Battleship Hill on the right, and Hill Q on the left, were still occupied, and as soon as it was light enough for these troops to realize what had happened, a fierce fire was opened from both flanks on the crest of Chunuk Bair. The 7/Gloucestershire, who had been later still in starting, and whose rear companies were only now approaching the final ascent, were caught by this fire, and suffered very heavily.

In a few minutes the whole situation had changed. Cox's columns on the left, which ought to have been attacking Hill Q and Hill 971, were far away from their objectives, and the garrisons of these points could devote their whole attention to the recovery of Chunuk Bair.

The two leading platoons of the 7/Gloucestershire gained the western shoulder of the summit, and here they found some cover. But the platoons in rear, striking right-handed to avoid the storm of fire, climbed down into Sazli Beit Dere and up on the other side, where they came into line on the right of the Wellington supporting companies a little below the crest. The Welch pioneer battalion, following in rear of the Gloucestershire, suffered even more heavily, and only a handful of the battalion, dazed with the shock of their desperate baptism of fire, succeeded in reaching the extreme right of the line. Thus, except for two rapidly dwindling companies on the crest and forward slopes of the ridge, the attacking troops were all on the reverse slope. None of them had any field of fire; their line was enfiladed at one end from Battleship Hill and at the other from Hill Q; and the ground was so rocky that digging was nearly impossible.

Fighting grimly, the two Wellington companies on top of the ridge maintained their exposed positions till nearly every man was killed. The few survivors were at last overwhelmed,

<sup>1</sup> Some of these men found and occupied a small Turkish trench less than two feet deep.

8 Aug. and soon after 9 o'clock the enemy tried to close with the main line. Here, however, thanks very largely to the magnificent leadership of Colonel Malone, the remainder of the Wellington and the remnants of the 7/Gloucestershire and 8/Welch continued to hold their own.

Any sign of movement on Rhododendron Spur was met by so heavy a fire from Battleship Hill that several hours passed before reinforcements could reach Malone's troops, and throughout the morning there was no communication between them and brigade headquarters.<sup>1</sup> The Maori contingent, starting off from the Apex about nine o'clock, was unable to face the fire, and swinging left-handed to the shelter of Aghyl Dere was lost to Johnston's force for the rest of the day.<sup>2</sup> The Auckland Mounted Rifles, dashing forward a little later, suffered so heavily that they only reached the Pinnacle. About 2 P.M., however, in answer to an urgent call for help, they made another effort, and dribbling forward in small parties eventually managed to reach the Wellington Battalion's line.

For the rest of the afternoon incessant fighting continued.<sup>3</sup> It was only by dint of frequent counter-charges that the New Zealand troops could keep the Turks from lining the crest of the ridge immediately above them, and in one of these sallies Malone was killed. But his splendid leadership had won the day for his troops. The Turkish attacks began to flag, and finally died away.

**Sketch** After dark the Otago Battalion and two squadrons of the  
**19.** Wellington Mounted Rifles were able to move forward without a casualty to assist in holding the position, and the remnants of the original garrison then withdrew to the Apex. Relief had come for them not one moment too soon. Of the Wellington Battalion only 2 officers and 47 men remained unwounded. The 8/Welch had lost 17 officers and 400 men; the 7/Gloucestershire had lost 350 men, and every one of its officers and sergeants had been either wounded or killed.

#### THE TURKISH SIDE ON THE 7TH AND 8TH AUGUST

It is plain that throughout the 7th August the Turkish situation on Sari Bair was critical. During the greater part of

<sup>1</sup> During the day Corporal C. R. G. Basset of the N.Z. Divisional Signal Coy. won the V.C. for laying a telephone wire to the front line and keeping it in repair under heavy fire.

<sup>2</sup> Later the Maoris joined up with some of Cox's troops near the Farm.  
<sup>3</sup> The Turks had by this time been reinforced by the 24th Regiment of the 8th Division from Krithia.



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that day the Turkish troops between Rattleship Hill and Biyuk 7 Aug. Anafarta apparently consisted of not more than a mountain battery and some 2,000 rifles. Towards evening, however, another mountain battery, three battalions of the 4th Division, and a detachment of machine guns from the fleet, were sent to the neighbourhood of Hill 971, and three more battalions of the 9th Division seem to have been put in between Hill Q and Chunuk Bair.

By the morning of the 8th, therefore, the available strength 8 Aug. of the Turks on the main ridge and Abdul Rahman Spur—a frontage of some 5,000 yards—probably amounted to 5,000 rifles, two mountain batteries, and a dozen machine guns. Further help, moreover, was on the way. A regiment of the 8th Division from Krithia reached Chunuk Bair in the course of the afternoon, and from that time onwards the strength of the defending force began to increase rapidly.

### GENERAL GODLEY'S PLAN FOR THE 9TH AUGUST

At General Godley's headquarters on the 8th August the high hopes encouraged by the first news that Chunuk Bair was captured were very quickly dispelled. By midday it was clear that on no other part of the front had any success been gained, and that even Johnston's brigade was only holding a precarious position on the reverse slope of the ridge. The central columns had apparently effected nothing, and Monash's troops had fallen back to their starting-point in some confusion and with very heavy casualties.

From Suvla there was no news at all. Late on the 7th it had been reported that General Stopford's corps had captured Chocolate Hill. But the bulk of his force was still close to the beach, and all around the bay were naked figures bathing. Plainly there was little hope of any direct support from that direction.

At a corps conference it was held to be useless for Godley's tired troops to make any further attacks in broad daylight against a watchful enemy in possession of every point of vantage. A fresh attack at dawn seemed the only practicable alternative. Orders were consequently issued for the positions already gained to be held at all costs, and for a renewal of the attack, following an artillery bombardment, immediately after daybreak.

It is hard to believe that these plans can have been framed with a great degree of confidence. It was plain, however, that only a desperate effort could rescue the British scheme from



8 Aug. utter failure. There were still a few New Army battalions at Anzac which had not been engaged. The main effort must be entrusted to them. The foothold already gained on Chunuk Bair would form a pivot for their attack, and it might surely be hoped that by the morning of the 9th the two divisions at Suvla would be able to divert Turkish attention by a greater show of activity on the northern flank.

The plan, as finally decided upon, was as follows. In view of the heavy casualties in the 4th Australian Brigade the capture of Koja Chemen Tepe was no longer to be attempted, and the morning's objective was to be the crest or the main ridge from Chunuk Bair northwards to Hill Q. The main effort was to be made against the summit and the northern shoulder of Chunuk Bair by five fresh or comparatively fresh battalions under Br.-General A. H. Baldwin, commanding the 38th Brigade.<sup>1</sup>

On the left, the 39th and Indian Brigades under General Cox, of which no unit had suffered much loss, were to renew the attempt to capture Hill Q. On the extreme right, Johnston's forward troops were to assault the southern shoulder of Chunuk Bair and extend their line southwards towards Battleship Hill. The preliminary bombardment would begin at 4.30 A.M. with every naval and shore gun that could be brought to bear on the position. At 5.15 A.M. the bombardment would lift, and all the attacking troops would dash forward together.

The punctual arrival of Baldwin's column at its place of deployment was plainly essential to the success of the whole scheme. General Godley was of opinion that his troops should advance along Rhododendron Spur. They could then form up in rear of the Pinnacle, covered by Johnston's forward line, and, as soon as the bombardment lifted, could make for the highest point of Chunuk Bair, thence swinging left-handed along the summit of the ridge in the direction of Hill Q. He decided, however, that he and Baldwin should first see the ground and discuss the matter with Johnston. He consequently told Baldwin to meet him at the Apex that afternoon, when a final decision could be reached.

We have already seen that the situation of Johnston's forward line in the early afternoon was highly precarious. His forward

<sup>1</sup> The 6/East Lancashire and 6/Loyal North Lancashire of Baldwin's own brigade, the 5/Wiltshire of the 45th Brigade (to be withdrawn for this purpose from Damakjelik Bair) and the last two battalions of Birdwood's corps reserve (see f.n. 2, p. 209). Later in the day, owing to the fatigue of Johnston's troops, it was decided to reinforce them overnight with the Loyal North Lancashire. This battalion reached the Apex at midnight, and Baldwin's force was thus reduced to four battalions:

battalions were hard pressed by the Turks, and the approach from the Apex was so exposed that it was difficult to send up reinforcements. In these circumstances, Johnston was of opinion that it would be unwise for Baldwin's troops to use the Apex route, and when, about 5 P.M., Baldwin arrived at his headquarters, he advised him not to do so.

Towards evening, however, the Turkish fire died down. Soon after nightfall, as already described, the Otago Battalion and the Wellington Mounted Rifles moved forward from the Apex without trouble to relieve the exhausted garrison of Johnston's forward line, and the rest of the night passed quietly. In point of fact, therefore, if Godley had insisted on Baldwin's troops advancing by this route, it is just possible that all might have turned out well.

Most unfortunately, however, General Godley was after all unable either to visit the Apex himself or to send a staff officer to represent him. As a result, the final choice of route was left to Baldwin, and that officer, having no personal knowledge of the country, decided to act on General Johnston's advice. Johnston urged him to move along Chailak Dere as far as Cheshire Ridge, to cross that ridge into Aghyl Dere, and thence to advance to his objective by way of the Farm. This advice proved disastrous.

#### THE CAPTURE AND LOSS OF HILL Q

Baldwin's small column, now reduced to four battalions, but accompanied by Br.-General Cooper and the headquarters of the 29th Brigade as well as his own, had meanwhile concentrated in a small gully about half way up Chailak Dere, and as soon as darkness fell the forward march began.

A heavy task faced these New Army battalions: they had to undertake a night march in unknown and extremely difficult country; the battle had already been in progress for 48 hours; the Turkish hold on the ridge was hourly becoming stronger; the chance of surprise had gone.<sup>1</sup> Yet this third assault was to be made by a weaker force—numerically and physically weaker—than that which had attempted the first. Johnston's and Cox's troops on Baldwin's right and left were already desperately tired. Even Baldwin's four battalions, though only one of them<sup>2</sup> had as yet been actively engaged, were very weary, and to

<sup>1</sup> So far as can be ascertained the main ridge between Battleship Hill and Biyuk Anafarta was held by some 7,000 infantry at dawn on the 9th, with other troops in reserve.

<sup>2</sup> The 5/Wiltshire from Damakjelik Bair.

8 Aug. some of the staff who watched them leave their rendezvous the chance of success at this late hour of the battle seemed frail indeed. There had been no time to reconnoitre the route, but the New Zealand Brigade was sending a couple of guides who were supposed to know the way.

Trouble began from the outset. The narrow gorge of Chailak Dere was choked with wounded men returning to the beach, and with the mules of General Johnston's brigade, tethered under cover. The column lost all cohesion; units became widely separated; there were long halts and delays.

9 Aug. It was already after midnight when the head of the column struck left-handed from the main track leading to Rhododendron Spur, and shortly afterwards the narrow gorge was found to end in a precipice. There was no way round, and the guides admitted they were lost.

In desperation, Baldwin now decided to retrace his steps to a point about a mile in rear, where he knew of a route across to the Aghyl Dere. But irreparable mischief had been done. The congestion in the nullah made movement slower than ever.

Sketch 20. Daybreak found the four battalions still stretched out in a long straggling line in the Aghyl Dere. The plan for a combined assault at 5.15 A.M. had fallen to pieces, and the last chance of success had disappeared.

General Godley's intention, it will be remembered, was that Cox on the left, Johnston on the right, and Baldwin in the centre should all attack simultaneously as soon as the bombardment lifted. Cox, in accordance with this plan, had arranged for the 1/6th Gurkhas and the detachment of 6/South Lancashire to advance on Hill Q, and for the 2/10th Gurkhas and the 9/Warwickshire, immediately north of the Farm, to make for a point on the main ridge about half way between Q and Chunuk Bair. These two attacks were to be supported by the two remaining battalions of the 39th Brigade. The troops on the lower spurs had been told, however, that they were not to move forward till Baldwin's battalions began to come into line. Johnston had similarly arranged for his forward troops to assault the enemy's trenches above them when Baldwin's attack developed on their left flank. All these plans were upset by the fatal delay to General Baldwin's force.

On the extreme right, under Chunuk Bair, the Otago Battalion and the Wellington Mounted Rifles were hotly attacked by bombs and rifle fire as soon as it was light enough to see. Their trenches were too close to the crest for Chunuk Bair to be included in the British preliminary bombardment, and throughout its course the Turkish fire from that neigh-



bourhood continued unchecked. At 5.15 A.M., therefore, when 9 Aug. the bombardment ceased elsewhere, the New Zealand troops were still under hot fire, and as Baldwin was nowhere to be seen, there was no thought of attack.

To the north of the Farm the 2/10th Gurkhas and the greater part of the 39th Brigade were still in their overnight positions, and they, too, pending Baldwin's arrival, had shown no sign of advancing.

Only on the extreme left, therefore, when the British bombardment lifted, was there any attempt to assault. There, with the 1/6th Gurkhas and his detachment of 6/South Lancashire, Major Allanson had spent the night in his advanced position under Hill Q. Already within assaulting distance of the crest, the only order that had reached him was to join in the general assault at 5.15 A.M. During the bombardment Allanson again watched in vain for any sign of other troops arriving, and again he decided that, with or without assistance, his own attack must be launched. So as soon as the bombardment lifted he called to his men to follow him, and Gurkhas and New Army troops started climbing the hill together.

The top of the ridge was gained without a check, but there a number of Turks, rushing back to their posts as soon as the bombardment ceased, were encountered in the open. In the bayonet fight which followed Allanson was wounded and his last remaining British officer with the 1/6th Gurkhas was killed. But the Turks were forced back, and a small portion of this vital ridge was again in British hands.

Flushed with success, some of the attacking troops dashed forward in pursuit, and another company of Turks, sheltering on the Turkish side of the hill, were driven headlong from their position. But Allanson's men were alone and unsupported; and very shortly afterwards they were flung into confusion by a second bombardment of the crest which they had just captured. For a moment a few figures were seen on the skyline by the troops far below, frantically waving to explain who they were. But these signals were made in vain; the heavy fire continued;<sup>1</sup> and a moment later the remnants of the little force which had so gallantly stormed the ridge were streaming back to their old line. Here they remained throughout the day, ready to regain the crest if any support arrived on their right flank. They repulsed several efforts to dislodge them, and only retired next morning on receipt of definite orders to do so. Their losses had then exceeded 200. Throughout the

<sup>1</sup> The navy and the shore artillery subsequently declared that this shelling was done by the Turks.

9 Aug. 9th the crest in front of them was not reoccupied by the Turks, the enemy probably realizing that the British artillery had got the range to a yard.

It was not until 6 A.M. that the leading battalion of General Baldwin's brigade began to advance on the Farm. By this time the Turks were manning the crest immediately north of Chunuk Bair in very considerable strength, and they also had a detachment of machine guns in a cornfield on the eastern side of the Farm. Lieut.-Colonel A. R. Cole-Hamilton of the 6/East Lancashire was mortally wounded at the head of his battalion, and so many casualties were suffered that Baldwin decided to withdraw to the edge of the Farm plateau, and there to dig in. A portion of the 10/Hampshire remained in an advanced position a little south-east of the Farm, and eventually established touch with New Zealand troops at the Apex.

Meanwhile, far to the north, a Turkish attack had developed against the 4/South Wales Borderers, the 4th Australian Brigade and the 6/King's Own, on Damakjelik Spur.

Here it must be explained that throughout the 7th and 8th August Liman von Sanders had remained convinced that the objective of the British troops who had landed at Suvla Bay was Kojia Chemen Tepe, and that the South Wales Borderers on Damakjelik Bair were a part of General Stopford's corps. He had early decided, therefore, that when the Turkish 7th and 12th Divisions under Feizi Bey arrived from Bulair, he would launch them in a counter-attack astride Azmak Dere. The 7th Division was to attack on the southern side, and the 12th Division on the northern side of the valley.

Calculating that these troops should reach the Suvla area during the morning of the 8th, Liman von Sanders had intended the attack to be delivered the same afternoon. But the column's advance was slower than expected, and when it at last arrived, the divisional commanders pleaded for time to rest and reconnoitre. Feizi Bey, without referring to the Commander-in-Chief, agreed to this request, and postponed the attack till day-break on the 9th. Hearing of this postponement on the evening of the 8th, Liman von Sanders at once removed Feizi Bey from his command and replaced him by Mustafa Kemal.

Mustafa Kemal arrived at his new headquarters too late to advance the hour of the attack. But it was launched at day-break on the 9th, and the left half of it was now bearing down on Godlley's northern flank.

It was about 4.30 A.M. when the Turkish 7th Division began to move forward against the northern end of Damakjelik Spur with four battalions in line and two in support. The Turkish

posts on Abdul Rahman Spur, co-operated with fire, and the 9 Aug. trenches of the 6/King's Own, on the right of the 4th Australian Brigade, were so heavily enfiladed that the battalion lost six officers and 120 men in the course of the day.

Against the concentrated fire of the 4th Australian Brigade the Turkish left wing could make no progress, and was driven back with loss. Further to the north, owing to the withdrawal of the 5/Wiltshire the previous afternoon, the 4/South Wales Borderers was holding a very extended front. But here, too, the Turkish advance was stopped, and those who reached the Borderers' parapets were driven back by a counter-attack.

The splendid bearing of all ranks of this battalion was recognized that night by a special message of congratulation from the Commander-in-Chief. Despite the loss of their commanding officer (Lieut.-Colonel F. M. Gillespie), at the beginning of the day, and in the face of continuous shelling; the Welsh troops had clung to their important position with admirable tenacity, and had beaten off a second assault in the evening with another counter-attack. Their casualties in the day's fighting amounted to 10 officers and 110 men.

#### THE FAILURE OF THE ANZAC PLAN

By 9 A.M. on the 9th it was clear to Generals Birdwood and Godley that the third attack on Sari Bair had failed. But the determination of these Anzac generals was still unbroken. Despite the fatigue of all their fighting troops, the depletion of the corps reserve, and the apparent stagnation at Suvla, they still cherished the hope that the battle was not yet lost, and that a fourth attempt might be successful.

For the moment, however, nothing more could be done. It was vitally important to cling to the pivotal foothold on the slopes of Chunuk Bair. But General Johnston's troops were very near to breaking-point. Many of them had been fighting for three days and three nights without sleep, and with little food or water. It was essential to relieve them that evening; and as a first step the 6/Leinster of the 29th Brigade, then in support at Quinn's, was hurried to the Apex to act as a local reserve. This done, the only battalion remaining in corps reserve was the 5/Connaught Rangers.

At 9.30 A.M. orders were issued for Godley's force to stand fast for the rest of the day, and plans were prepared for withdrawing tired troops that night, and reorganizing the line. It was decided that, whether for attack or defence, the new line was too extended for adequate supervision by one divisional



9 Aug. staff, and General Shaw was now placed in charge of the front at Rhododendron and the Farm, as also of the inner defences on Destroyer Hill, Table Top and Bauchop's Hill. Johnston, coming under Shaw's orders, was to remain for the present in executive command of the troops on Rhododendron Spur and Chunuk Bair. But his forward units would be replaced after dark by New Army troops, and his whole brigade withdrawn for rest and reorganization.

The bitter truth was not yet realized at corps or divisional headquarters—still less at G.H.Q. But it is now clear that by midday on the 9th August the Anzac offensive had failed. Officers and men alike had given of their best. But the New Zealand and Australian units were physically unfit at that time for any prolonged strain. The New Army troops, though well trained, were lacking in necessary experience, and the steep and confusing hillsides, the unaccustomed heat, and the torture of thirst had combined to form a greater obstacle than the opposition of the enemy.